

**Solar America Initiative  
Technology Acceptance Technical Exchange Meeting  
Washington, DC  
June 12, 2006**

**Market Expansion Breakout Group A**

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**What are the biggest new opportunities or current activities that we should support?**

- Target Markets:
  - Areas with rapidly increasing utility rates: aim at the homeowner—Northeast cities may be a good place to start.
  - Areas with increasing level of construction.
  - Look at big, up-and-coming markets. Look for opportunities that haven't already been exploited.
  - The biggest market area of interest was in the buildings sector:
    - Residential new construction.
    - Retrofit residential: couple energy efficiency with solar.
    - Commercial and industrial markets: address utility rates and power quality concerns.
    - Healthcare/hospitals (e.g. Veterans Administration facilities).
  - Regulators: National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners committees, states with high utility prices.
  - Target production builders in states with high electric rates and a big new construction market.
- Development of national interconnection standards (technical rules) is a top priority.
  - Learn from what others are doing:
    - Interstate Renewable Energy Council model based on state models and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.
    - Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers
    - Net metering goes along with this (payment regime).
    - 10% of funding allocated to interconnection was suggested, along with leverage of state activities.
- More substantive links/coordination between the Department of Energy Solar and Building Programs

## **What are the best Solar-ready niche applications?**

- Do not need to focus on niche applications; focus on mainstream markets.
- Using energy security (benefits) as a “niche” market was suggested, but targeting other types of smaller niche applications was not advocated, per se.

## **Best Ways to Engage Builders**

- Target areas with high utility rates.
- Don’t exclude Building America builders.
- Builders should be encouraged/have an advantage in the proposal process.
- Market aggregation and large purchase agreement focus over the long term (Department of Energy representative suggestion—not well received).

## **Solar America City Designation**

- Solar America City designation—piggyback efforts of other organizations (e.g. Sierra Club’s “Cool Cities” campaign, green community efforts).
- There is an opportunity for cost share from cities.
  - Marketing and outreach resources could be part of cost share, i.e. cost share could be used for areas for which the Department of Energy lacks resources.
- Incorporate Million Solar Roofs lessons learned/partnerships.
- This should be an enabling program (not just a designation).
  - Include technical expertise (see “Technical Assistance” below for details).

## **Technical Assistance—level of effort and subject matter**

- Technical Assistance (in the form of education, e.g. Million Solar Roofs lessons learned, not technical assistance on PV installation design) should be provided to:
  - Code officials
  - Regulators
  - Building Inspectors
  - Markets with compelling utility environments
- Technical assistance is not one size fits all
  - One component of technical assistance should identify and address “up-and-comers” target market.
- Distribute technical assistance funds across sectors but target/focus the funding in markets with the greatest potential.
- Develop standard procurement specifications for municipalities.

## **Proposal Phasing**

- There was a lot of interest in a multi-year effort: 3-5 years, maybe even 7 years.
  - It was noted that achieving a Solar America City designation could take 10 years.

## **Project Partnering**

Successful partners would include (and eligibility requirements for partnerships might include):

- Regulators and builders need to be part of the team bidding on the solicitation.
- Big Non-governmental organizations (on the scale of the National Resources Defense Council, the Sierra Club, etc.).
- Encourage broad, diverse groups.
  - Multi-institutions with real commitments (cost share).
- Lending/finance institutions?
  - Energy Savings Performance Contract (ESPC) model works well with shorter-term projects, i.e. transaction costs vs. payoff. There may be some lessons to learn from this model
- Financial soundness (should be part of proposal requirements).
  - Identify value of PV to the community, i.e. full cost accounting.

## **Proposal Evaluation Criteria / Metrics**

- There should be PV value to communities beyond kWh produced.
- Don't restrict awards to building-integrated PV projects (there was not a lot of support for targeting building integrated PV separately; it was thought that we should be more inclusive in the Funding Opportunity Announcement criteria/leave it up to the proposers).
  - Some valuable projects that use PV (e.g. brownfields, parking lots) don't involve buildings.
- A Solar America City designation should have thoughtful criteria and metrics:
  - Minimum amount of PV per capita.
  - Demonstrate the added value PV brings to the community.
  - Get the right people on board.
  - Should meet pre-requisites that show forward momentum toward solar.
  - Demonstrate how dollars spent contribute to Solar America Initiative goals and address barriers.
  - The Department of Energy needs goals and metrics.
    - E.g., resources spent on marketing and outreach and the impacts of those efforts.
    - Look at study the by Dr. Richard Perez on where solar can make impact.

## **Award Amounts**

- Percentage should be based on priorities
  - Interconnection and net metering, jobs, and codes and standards were listed as priorities—these need to be prioritized.

### **Sharing Results of SAI partnerships**

- It was suggested that there be a long-term web presence where results/outcomes of Solar America Initiative partnerships/Funding Opportunity Announcement-awarded projects can be posted to enable information sharing/lessons learned/replicability with other entities.